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NINTH PLENUM SPEECH OF MIECZYSLAW MARZEC
ON INCREASING PRODUCTION OF BASIC CONSUMER GOODS IN POLAND

Nowe Drogi
 Warsaw, Oct 1953

[The following report of Mieczyslaw Marzec, Deputy Director of the Light Industry Division of the KC PZPR (Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party), was given at the Ninth Plenum of the KC PZPR, held in Warsaw on 29-30 October 1953.

The report was given at the plenum as an amplification of the featured report of Premier Boleslaw Bierut, "Task of Party in Struggle to Raise Standard of Living of Workers in Current Phase of Building Socialism." An English-language translation of Bierut's report is available in the PAP (Polish Press Agency) release of 6 November 1953, pages 1-44.]

In discussing the theses and Premier Bierut's report, it is very important to explain the real meaning of the tasks set forth and the methods for their achievement to all party members, to the thousands not in the party, and to laborers and to white-collar workers employed in light industry, the food industry, the paper industry, and the local industries.

To increase production of basic commodities of the light industry, the food industry, the paper industry, the local industries, and work cooperatives, we must improve or even change our style of work. Furthermore, the powiat, the local, and the wojewodztwo party echelons must give the primary party organizations more effective aid. The latent reserves in the factories can be found and exploited if our party organizations, especially party echelons, and people's councils will give special attention to the initiative of crews, to the regional economic and social apparatus, and to the working populace. The party and people's councils must utilize their experience and criticism.

We must admit that so far our efforts in this direction have not been very satisfactory.

During 1952 not one of the executive branches of the wojewodztwo committees of Lublin, Wroclaw, Bydgoszcz, or Lodz wojewodztwos examined the work of the local industries, the cooperatives, or the food industry. As of September 1953 the situation had not changed basically. I know of only one instance in small-scale industry where the first secretary of the wojewodztwo committee and other secretaries visited the central clothing sales office, stores, and workshops, or rubbed elbows with the people and saw production.

The basic analysis of this sector made by the Stalinogrod Wojewodztwo Committee and research carried on by certain other wojewodztwo committees indicate great production capabilities in local industry and in the cooperative industry.

There are also many defects and shortcomings which must be removed to improve the supply of consumer goods to the people.

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Regional industry and cooperative industry play a great role in satisfying consumer needs. Although production of the socialist small-scale industry has increased greatly, the production capabilities of its plants are not being exploited properly. In the first half of 1953 production capabilities of regional industry were exploited only 55 percent by the wojewodztwo administrations. There were 200-400 machines standing idle in various branch unions of the small-scale industry.

According to data of the Ministry of Small-Scale Industry and Manual Trades, the total 1953 value of production of the wojewodztwo administrations was comprised of 25 percent group "A" commodities [producers' goods] and 75 percent group "B" commodities [consumer goods]. In industrial administrations, 44 percent constituted producers' goods and 56 percent consumer goods.

In certain areas the situation is different. For instance in the WZPT (Wojewodzki Zarzad Przemyslu Terenowego, Wojewodztwo Administration of Regional Industry) of the City of Warsaw, producers' goods constitute 71 percent of production in terms of value; in Krakow, 62 percent; in Opole, 68 percent; and in Bialystok, 83 percent.

In the Branch Union of Metal Products Cooperatives in Stalinogrod, basic consumer goods constitute 9.6 percent of production while producers' goods constitute 90.4 percent.

With such an allocation of effort it is impossible for local industry to supply the market with basic consumer goods. Although there is a shortage of many items on the market, certain factories of local industry, which formerly produced basic consumer goods, have shifted to the production of producers' goods for key industries. The "Postep" Workers' Cooperative in Zabrze, which formerly produced metal smallware, is now producing electric welders and seats for the Star motor vehicles. The Workers' Cooperatives in Ustron, which makes various castings for key industries, could be making hot plates, etc. The Chorzow, Czestochowa, and Bytom cooperatives, which had been producing metal smallware, have also shifted to producers' goods.

Neither our ministry, the wojewodztwo people's councils, nor the party echelons have shown adequate interest in checking the work and plans of the WZPT and the work cooperatives. They have not fought for adequate assortment of goods nor for the production of basic consumer goods. In most cases they have not checked the fulfillment of plans in terms of assortments; they have been satisfied in fulfilling the plans in terms of value. The managers of the cooperatives have been commended even if the plan of assortments was fulfilled only 10 or 20 percent. In many instances, as was the case in Wroclaw, the planning divisions had submitted plans to factories in terms of value only, without stipulating the type of production. The factories, left to their own devices, take the line of least resistance and produce investment goods, which are always in demand and for which raw materials are more easily obtained.

In my opinion the production of certain producers' goods should be shifted to key industries. Local industry ought to concern itself with the needs of the people and the needs of the region and supply them to the best of its ability. The State Economic Plan for 1954 should indicate the correct proportion of production covered by centralized plans in relation to production covered by local plans. It should also indicate the proper proportions of consumer goods production and producers' goods production.

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In many instances small-scale industry has paid no attention to market demands; instead of complementing it has duplicated the consumer goods production of the key industries, manufacturing articles in good supply instead of those in short supply. For instance the cooperatives had not fulfilled the plan in children's shoes, which were scarce, but were manufacturing shoes for adults. Because they had exceeded the plan in terms of value, they were commended.

In trying to fulfill the quantitative plan and the plan in terms of value, many cooperatives have tried to sell poor-quality goods on the market and many have tried various devices to deceive the inspectors.

The inspectors are becoming more exacting, as shown by the great number of rejects and articles returned for repair in the first half of 1953. Poor-quality goods without inspection stamps, goods without maker's identification, articles made of unsuitable raw materials, etc., should not be accepted. We should make an effort to increase the range and improve new models and styles. The work of the inspectors will continue to be difficult and burdensome unless we change our attitude toward quality. This change of attitude means a continuous fight against defective production. We must explain to the workers that defective production is a crime against the national economy and directly affects the interests of the people.

Let me say a few words on the services in the villages and production aid for the working peasants. This problem has not been receiving proper attention from the managers of local economic agencies, people's councils, or even the party echelons.

The number of shoeshops, tailor shops, etc., in the villages is most inadequate. Services for the repair of farm machines are not much better. Amid this present shortage of industrial and nonindustrial services there are many instances of wrong attitudes toward craftsmen (manual trades). Many people's councils are not interested in the crafts and do not know how to utilize them in the service of the people.

The theses provide for a 40-percent increase in service points within 2 years. The Ministry of Small-Scale Industry and Manual Trades can easily achieve this task if the people's councils and party organizations will exploit local possibilities and also if they will provide working space and raw materials.

We were interested in seeing how this problem was being solved in Nowa Huta. When our instructors approached a secretary of the precinct committee in the matter, he was amazed that we even mentioned the problem of these services. He said that in this period of industrialization, when Nowa Huta was building a combine and thousands of dwellings, there were more important problems to be considered than the problem of services.

There are many who do not understand the meaning of services because they do not appreciate the problem of small-scale production.

At present we are faced with the problem of creating more service points in the villages. We must take into account the shortage of blacksmiths, coopers, wheelwrights, etc., and we must show more interest in training the youth in these trades. We will find many willing applicants in the village if we take the trouble to look for them.

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There are many shortcomings in technical progress in our factories. With more efficient methods our factories could easily improve the quality of consumer goods, but they are not always interested in improving their efficiency. In my opinion we should stress the point which Comrade Bierut emphasized in his report, that, after all, the interests and the good of the working man and the satisfaction of his needs are the goal of all our political and economic work. We must discuss the problems of the light industry, the food industry, and the local industry at the plenums and at local, powiat, and wojewodztwo executive committees. We must mobilize the working masses to increase the production of basic consumer goods in line with the directives of the Ninth Plenum.

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